

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](https://paypal.me/robbradshaw)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Baptist Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bq_01.php

The Late Midland College

(concluded).

4.—VARIOUS OFFICERS.

1. **WARDENS.** When the amalgamation of General and Particular Baptists took place in 1891, the College was reorganized as described in Section 7, and under the new constitution it was provided that a Warden should be elected annually, who should not be eligible for re-election, and that during his term of office he should be entitled to preside at all meetings of the Institution. This office was filled by Rev. J. Clifford, M.A., D.D.; Rev. J. G. Greenhough, M.A.; Rev. J. Jenkyn Brown; Rev. W. Evans; Rev. T. Barrass; Mr. W. Hunt, J.P.; Rev. G. M. McElwee, M.A., B.Sc.; Ald. W. R. Wherry, J.P.; Rev. W. Bishop; Mr. Alfred Bradley; Rev. G. Hill, M.A.; Rev. C. W. Vick; Mr. W. B. Clark; Rev. L. C. Parkinson, M.A.; Rev. J. H. Atkinson; Rev. G. Hugo Heynes; Ald. Sir Joseph Bright, J.P.; Mr. J. L. Ward, J.P.; Rev. R. F. Handford; Mr. P. H. Stevenson; Rev. R. C. Ford, M.A., B.D.; Rev. F. C. Player, B.A.; Mr. Jos. Turner; and Mr. R. M. Craven, D.Sc. The duties of the Warden did not extend beyond the delivery of an inaugural address at the Annual Meeting of the College, and the chairmanship of Executive Meetings.

2. **TREASURERS.** In the latter half of the period of its history the College had six treasurers, who succeeded to the office as follows :

- 1858. Mr. G. Baldwin, of Nottingham.
- 1861. Mr. T. W. Marshall, of Loughborough.
- 1890. Mr. S. Bennett, of Derby.
- 1892. Mr. W. B. Bembridge, J.P., of Ripley.
- 1893. Mr. J. S. Smith, J.P., of Mountsorrel.
- 1913. Mr. G. Massey, J.P., of Spalding.

Mr. Marshall, who held the office for twenty-eight years with marked ability, was the son-in-law of his predecessor. He was a bank manager, a man of fine character, and was in great request as a lay preacher for special occasions. He always wore at white cravat, and when Dr. A. M. Fairbairn met him in 1883, he asked the Principal of the College why a *minister* was chosen for the office of treasurer. Mr. Marshall's neighbour, Mr. J. S. Smith, J.P., was treasurer for twenty years, and, like Mr. Baldwin, was enthusiastic, efficient, generous in sympathy with the Principals. Mr. Massey served the College well at a time of great anxiety.

3. SECRETARIES. The list of Secretaries and Joint Secretaries for the past eighty years, contains the names of sixteen ministers, most of whom were eminent in the service of the Kingdom of Heaven, and four of whom are still spared to us. As nearly as possible, they are mentioned here in the order of their succession: Joseph Goadby, Hugh Hunter, S. Wigg, J. C. Pike, William Underwood, James Lewitt, Samuel Cox, Harris Crassweller, Thomas Goadby, William Evans, C. W. Vick, C. Payne, J. R. Godfrey, Robert Silby, E. Carrington, and Edward Elliott. There were also laymen who rendered good service in the Joint Secretariat—especially with regard to finance—such as Messrs. W. Hunt, J.P., S. Hall, G. Brailsford, and P. H. Stevenson—of whom the first and last named survive.

5.—CO-OPERATION AND UNION.

1. The removal of the College from Chilwell back to Nottingham in 1883 for the purpose of securing to the students special training at the newly-established University College, made possible co-operation between the two Colleges in Forest Road—Congregational and Baptist—so that from 1893, Rev. J. A. Mitchell, B.A., Congregational Principal, was instructing seven Baptist students in Church History, New Testament Exegesis, and New Testament Introduction. This work was continued in following years by Rev. J. D. Jones, M.A., B.D., then of Lincoln. Subsequently, until the closing of the Midland College, teaching was given (e.g. in Apologetics and Homiletics) by Principals Revs. J. B. Paton, M.A., D.D., and D. L. Ritchie, and (e.g. in Old Testament Introduction and Christian Apologetics) by Professor H. F. Sanders, B.A., B.D. On the other hand, the Baptist Tutorial staff lectured on such subjects as the Apocrypha, New Testament Greek, and "The English Version of the Bible, 1611-1912." "The interchange of tutorial services" between the two colleges was declared by the Baptist Council to be to "mutual advantage."

2. In 1898 a scheme was adopted at Rawdon and Nottingham for the united working of the two Colleges for three years, as under—

(a) That all candidates accepted at Rawdon shall proceed to Nottingham, and all candidates accepted at Nottingham shall continue there for their Arts course, unless that has previously been taken elsewhere, in which case they will enter immediately upon their Theological course.

(b) That together with Arts, the course at Nottingham shall include Homiletics, English Bible Introduction, and Outlines of Theology.

(c) That a Resident Tutor shall be appointed for Nottingham,

who, in the event of the union of the Colleges, shall be a member of the staff of the Joint College.

(d) That there shall be one Principal for the two Colleges, and that the Rev. T. V. Tymms, D.D., shall be that Principal.

(e) That the Senior Students now at Nottingham, together with the students who subsequently complete their Arts course there, shall proceed to Rawdon for their Theological course.

Rev. S. W. Bowser, B.A., on the recommendation of Dr. McLaren and Dr. Angus (who were fully acquainted with his acquirements at University College, London, his teaching work in Birkenhead and Liverpool and his Honorary Secretaryship of the Lancashire and Cheshire Association), was unanimously invited to take the position specified in Clause (c). The arrangement continued in force until 1903, with the result that in four years fifteen Rawdon men studied at Nottingham, and eleven Nottingham men studied at Rawdon.

3. The Joint Committee responsible for the inception and working of this scheme, who had stipulated "that no action should be taken which would be likely to hinder ultimate union with Brighton Grove, Manchester, in one United Northern College," at their meeting on 25th November, 1901, came to this conclusion :

"Inasmuch as there is no possibility of college union save at Manchester, and in co-operation with the Brighton Grove College : Resolved that the Secretary be instructed to communicate with the Manchester Committee through Principal J. T. Marshall, M.A., and ascertain whether they are willing to appoint representatives to confer with us on this subject."

The result was that arrangements were made for a Conference between ten representatives of the Rawdon and Nottingham Joint Committee, and an equal number of Manchester representatives, and on 13th January, 1902, this agreement was reached :

"That in the judgment of this conference it is desirable that the amalgamation of the three colleges should be effected at Manchester, provision being made in the scheme of union for the efficient teaching of those principles for the sake of which Brighton Grove College was established."

A scheme of amalgamation was prepared accordingly and was submitted to the Committee of the three Colleges at Midsummer, 1902, who approved it with very slight modification, and a Provisional Committee was appointed to continue the negotiations. Progress was made with the nomination of the Staff for the United College, and more than one Church expected to lose its pastor on his appointment to a professorship. Rev. G. Hill, M.A., of Nottingham, was invited to become Governor, and

the Provisional Committee deemed "it essential for the due discharge of his duties that he should *from the first* take up his residence in the buildings of the United College." But a "suggestion had already been made that Principal J. T. Marshall should remain in residence at Brighton Grove, and the terms were reported on which he was prepared to continue to board the students." To this it was objected "that it would create an impossible situation if the students should live with one of the Professors, and apart from the Governor."

So was created a deadlock which terminated the proceedings. Ostensibly, "the whole scheme of amalgamation fell to the ground owing to the divergence of opinion as to who should occupy the existing residence, when the work of the United College began."

Upon receiving (8th June, 1903) the report of their representatives on the Provisional Committee, the Council of the Midland College expressed its "profound regret at the failure of the negotiations for the amalgamation of the three Colleges. It thanks its representatives for their services, and especially begs to record its gratitude to the Warden, the Rev. G. Hill, M.A., for his untiring labours and the conspicuous ability with which he has conducted the negotiations." The disappointment was painfully felt at Nottingham and elsewhere. It could not fail to have its effect in depressing the work and in contributing to

6.—DIFFICULTIES AND DECLINE.

1. But it seems probable that the disappearance of the Midland College from among our denominational institutions was due primarily to the amalgamation of General and Particular Baptists in 1901. Union was effected between two Foreign Missionary and two Home Missionary Societies, between two Loan Building Funds, and between Associations and Conferences throughout the country. It was a triumph for Christian Brotherhood. But it fell short of advancing the cause of ministerial education. Unlike the other Colleges, this institution, to quote Dr. Clifford, was "the College of a denomination." Its property was owned, and its affairs were controlled, by the General Baptist Association. In the later years a public meeting on behalf of the College was held during the Annual Assembly. Some were sanguine enough to hope that the Baptist Union might accept responsibility for the College, as it did for the Home Mission. But the connexional spirit was lacking, and it was deemed inexpedient, if not impossible to give special official recognition to the smallest of the English colleges—a recognition which was not offered to the other colleges, and which they would not have been likely to accept. When the leaders at Nottingham found that the organization upon which they had relied, viz. the General Baptist Association,

was passing away, they secured the transfer of the administration to a constituency similar to that of other Colleges, and including ministers and representatives of supporting Churches, and personal contributors. The officers and other members of the Executive were to be elected at the Annual Meeting of the constituency, and two representatives were to be added by each of the following bodies: (a) The Council of the Baptist Union; (b) The East Midland Baptist Association; (c) The West Midland Baptist Association. Unfortunately for Nottingham, the "territorial" idea did not find acceptance. For instance, churches in London and Yorkshire which had supported Regent's Park or Rawdon, continued to do so, and ex-General Baptist Churches in London and Yorkshire continued to support Nottingham. Of course, the bulk of the income at Nottingham was derived from the Midlands, but its constituency became weaker rather than stronger, and it was soon evident that the area of a college constituency could not be strictly confined by any geographical term. *General* Baptist affinities were weakened, and there was nothing comparable with them to take their place.

2. The result in the matter of finance may be briefly stated. The income of the College from collections and subscriptions had risen in 1892 to £603, and in 1900 to £640, but it declined in 1913 to £400, and in 1917 (i.e. "war time") to £200. Through a long course of years these amounts were supplemented by grants, etc., from various extraneous sources, and even in 1917 the following were received: From Joseph Davis Charity, £88; General Baptist Fund, £40; Misterton Trust, £28; Reyner Trust, £20; Cottage and Shop Rent, £39; total, £215. But the College had no other property. In 1918, however, Dr. John Clifford reached the sixtieth anniversary of his entrance to the Christian ministry, and the Council held that the occasion could not be more fittingly commemorated than by raising a "Clifford Diamond Jubilee Fund" for the endowment of the institution at which he made preparation for his life work. Dr. Clifford consented, and an appeal was issued to the Churches in the principal centres of the Midland district. Leicester took up the challenge with enthusiasm and was prepared to raise two-fifths of the £10,000 required, but from other towns there was little or no response, and the effort was abandoned. In the course of discussions covering the preceding years, some members of the Council would urge that in order to secure an efficient head for the College, it was necessary to raise the annual income to a higher figure. At another time the opinion would be emphasised that "if you get the right man, the money will come." And so there was no movement but that of the "vicious circle," until the Endowment Fund was suggested, only to be dropped almost immediately.

3. During the term of the Rev. Thomas Goadby's office as Principal, 1873-1889, the teaching staff of the College was never so complete as the Executive intended it to be. Between 1889 and 1891, the work was in charge of a "Tutorial Syndicate," on which Revs. E. E. Coleman, J. Clifford, M.A., O. D. Campbell, M.A., W. Evans, W. Miller, C. Payne, and W. R. Stevenson, M.A., served for longer or shorter periods. Then came the appointment of Rev. T. Witton Davies, B.A., "as tutor and professor and general director of the College." "In view of Mr. Davies' expressed preference for tutorial as distinct from presidential duties, it was suggested by the Council that he be asked to undertake the entire management of the College, with residence for awhile, in the hope that, should the funds come in satisfactorily, he should be provided with a colleague who would relieve him of all except tutorial duties." But the "colleague" was not found, and the published reports show that for the seven years of his tenure of office, Dr. Davies took rank as "Principal and Professor of Biblical languages and theology." When he resigned, the Council of the College passed the following resolution on 20th July, 1898 :

"That after the communication of Rev. T. Witton Davies, B.A., Ph.D., M.R.A.S., of 30th June, followed by his intimation of his acceptance of the invitation to the Bangor Baptist College, and to the Bangor University College, the members of the Council feel that they can only acquiesce in the arrangements in the spirit of the resolution passed at their last meeting. At the same time they desire to place on record their high appreciation of all the good work done during the seven years that Dr. Davies has so honourably discharged the various duties of the Principalship; they also rejoice in the testimony borne by past and present students to the great help and inspiration derived from Dr. Davies' instructions, influence, and example; and again congratulate him on receiving an appointment to positions for which his special acquirements and aptitudes so fully qualify him. The Council also gladly and gratefully acknowledge the unobtrusive and efficient assistance which Mrs. Davies has rendered in regard to College correspondence, and other matters; and they pray that both Dr. and Mrs. Davies may have much pleasure and great prosperity in their prospective sphere of Christian service."

In Section 5 the conditions are given under which Rev. S. W. Bowser, B.A., received his appointment as "Resident Tutor." When the proposal for union with Rawdon and Manchester Colleges came to nothing, Mr. Bowser became "tutor and resident Principal," and then "resident Principal." Mr. Bowser, like Dr. Davies, had to proceed without the proposed "colleague,"

and in 1909 he was recognized simply as "Principal" of the College.

The Warden, in his inaugural address on 20th October, 1898, truly said, "No single individual is capable of acting as Principal and Professor of Biblical Languages and Theology and Church History."

The discouragement arising out of these difficulties was very great, and so the College was ill-prepared for the decline which was accelerated by the outbreak and continuance of the Great War.

4. On the resignation of Principal Bowser in 1912, for the sake of economy the College ceased to be residential, and the students were "boarded out" in the neighbourhood, whilst the Principal's residence was occupied by a "House Governor" who superintended the students and kept open the necessary classrooms. At the meeting of the Council on 11th December, 1912, the following resolution was passed: "In accepting the resignation of the Principal, the Rev. Sidney W. Bowser, B.A., the Council desire to express their high appreciation of his personal character and faithful service. In the midst of difficulties arising from various causes, Mr. Bowser has shown such patience, industry, and steady persistence as merit a cordial acknowledgment. The Council are grateful to Mr. Bowser for his unfailing interest in the students under his care, and for the example of ministerial diligence and Christian courtesy which he has always set before them. With regard to his work as tutor, they wish to make special mention of his classes in the Greek New Testament, to the exceptional value of which frequent testimony has been borne. They assure Mr. Bowser of their sincere esteem, and trust he may have before him many years of useful work in the the service of Christ and the Churches."

After 1915 there was no addition to the list of students, and in 1917 only two men were left. On 11th November, 1915 it was resolved: "This Council rejoices that some of the students have offered themselves for special service in this time of national crisis, and expresses the hope that all the men will take similar action. In view of such conditions, the Council resolves to suspend the work of the College for the remainder of the Session, and intends to resume when the war is over. The Council undertakes to give careful and sympathetic consideration to special cases of inability on the part of the men to render national service."

Messrs. R. Hurt and H. Lloyd were accepted for service in connection with the R.A.M.C., and went into training, but Mr. Hurt's health broke down. Mr. Lloyd rendered good service at Salonica until he was invalided home. Messrs. A. Baldwin and P. Hampton were rejected on medical grounds. Mr. A. E. Calow,

the last of all the Mildand students, was accepted by the Y.M.C.A. for service in Egypt, and was proceeding thither in the *Maloja*, when that vessel was sunk by the enemy off Dover, and he saved himself by swimming. National service was also rendered through the use of the College building by the military authorities. When it was no longer occupied by students, it became a temporary hostel, at one time for a detachment of the W.A.A.C., and at another time for as many soldiers as could be accommodated there.

Until the Congregational College was closed (under war conditions) in 1917, Principal Dr. D. L. Ritchie and Professor H. F. Sanders, B.A., B.D., continued their valuable co-operation in tutorial work. From 1913 to 1917 Rev. E. J. Roberts, M.A., B.D., served as Baptist Tutor. He was a graduate of Oxford and Glasgow Universities; had studied at the Baptist Theological College of Scotland, at Mansfield College, Oxford, and at Marburg University; had taken first class honours in philosophy at Glasgow; honours in the final school in theology at Oxford; M.A. and B.D. at Glasgow, and was a Prizeman in Logic, Philosophy, Hebrew, New Testament Criticism, and Divinity at Glasgow, and Prizeman at Mansfield College, Oxford. In 1914-15 Rev. C. H. Watkins, M.A., D.Th., who had studied at Nottingham, at Mansfield College, Oxford, and at Oxford, Berlin, and Heidelberg Universities, did valuable work. Special lectures were given and occasional classes were held by friends who readily rendered help under the difficult circumstances of the time, and their names may be recorded here: R. H. Coats, M.A., B.D.; J. D. Freeman, M.A.; R. C. Ford, M.A.; F. S. Granger, M.A., D.Litt.; G. Hill, M.A., D.D.; G. Howard James; A. E. Owen Jones; T. Phillips, B.A.; F. C. Player, B.A.; and F. C. Spurr.

7.—APPLICATION OF ASSETS.

1. When it became evident that there was no alternative to the carrying out of the second paragraph of the resolution of the special Constituency Meeting held on 9th June, 1914, the Council, on 1st July, 1919, resolved to "recommend to the Trustees the immediate sale of the College premises on Forest Road," and appointed a "sub-committee to make inquiries with regard to other College property in Nottingham, and if they should deem it expedient, to arrange for the sale of it also." The result was that the Forest Road property, sold to the Y.M.C.A. to be used as a hostel, realised £3,500; the Mansfield Road property realised £720; and the Hyson Green property £200. Total, £4,420. The majority of the Trustees decided that it was desirable to devote the proceeds of the sales to the forming of scholarships open to students in English Baptist Colleges

who had matriculated at a British University, or passed some equivalent examination, that the Trust for this scheme and for the Pegg Scholarships should be made co-extensive, and that the approval of the Board of Education and of the Charity Commissioners should be sought accordingly. In this decision the Trustees of the Pegg Scholarship Fund concurred, and here it should be explained that under the terms of his will, dated 30th March, 1867, Mr. Robert Pegg, of Derby, bequeathed the sum of £2,000 to be applied to the foundation of two scholarships in the General Baptist College, Chilwell, the annual income thereof to be disposed of from time to time in manner thereafter mentioned. They were of the value of about £45 each per annum for two years, and were open to students of the College who matriculated in the University of London, and who also passed an examination in Hebrew, in the Greek of the New Testament, Church History, and the Christian Evidences. The scholars under the Trust were : G. H. Bennett, 1882-3 ; F. Cunliffe, 1884-5 ; T. A. Plant, 1886-7 ; F. G. French, 1890-1 ; N. H. Marshall, B.A., 1898-9 ; J. H. Rushbrooke, B.A., 1899-1900 ; Gwilym Davies, 1902-3 ; C. H. Watkins, M.A., 1905-6 ; G. H. Matthews, 1905-6 ; A. C. Underwood, 1908-9 ; and C. M. Coltman, M.A., 1913-5.

It will be observed that the Trustees proposed that in the new scheme the scholarship shall be made available for all English Baptist Colleges, whether the Trust Deed be of a Calvinistic or an Arminian type, whereas the late College from the beginning had been a distinctly Arminian foundation, and the property at Nottingham, from the sale of which the proposed scholarships are to be derived, was purchased with General Baptist money.

The names submitted for Trusteeship in the proposed scheme are those of gentlemen resident in the East Midland District (whereas the scholarships are to be available for English students generally) with the exception that the names of Dr. Clifford and Rev. W. J. Avery are included. But as the filling up of vacancies (upon the number of Trustees being reduced to seven), is to be effected by the Council of the Baptist Union, it may be hoped that such a piece of provincialism will find its remedy. The Secretary of the Board of Education, on 5th February, 1923, issued a draft scheme for the College Foundation. Any objections or suggestions respecting the draft scheme may be made to the Board in writing within two calendar months from that date, as per advertisement.

2. The contents of the College Library were distributed thus : Upwards of 800 volumes were given to the Library of the Baptist Union Women's Training College, "Havelock Hall," Hampstead, and 426 (including a number of pamphlets) to the Baptist Historical Society. Of the 1,300 books left, 200 were

voted to ministers in the East Midland Association, and to lay preachers through their Association. The remainder found purchasers.

3. In 1917, when the military authorities were about to occupy the College premises, much of the old furniture was sold to make way for army fittings. Some household effects were retained until 1920, and when a selection had been made from them by representatives of the Women's College, for use at Hampstead, the rest were also sold.

8.—THEOLOGICAL CONTINUITY.

The principles for the advancement of which Dan Taylor founded the "Academy" in 1797 are more "living and active" than ever, and are distinctly symbolized and inculcated by means of the "John Clifford" Chair for "General Baptist Biblical and Theological Teaching" at Rawdon College. Toward its maintenance, annual grants are made, with the approval of the Charity Commissioners, of about £220 from the Joseph Davis Charity, and £40 from the General Baptist Fund (see section 6). Total, about £260. In order to complete provision for the Professorship it is the intention of the Executive of the College to raise (as soon as the financial condition of the country will permit) a capital sum to yield about £140 per annum, and thus secure £400 in all. The first to fill the Chair is Rev. Professor A. C. Underwood, M.A., B.D., B.Litt., who commenced his training at the Midland College, whence he proceeded to Oxford, and afterwards served on the Staff of the Baptist Missionary Society at Serampore College.

And so, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, where Dan Taylor, a century and a half ago, first meditated on the problem of Baptist ministerial education, and had two young men in his own house at Birchcliffe for training, Rawdon blends his tradition with that of his friend John Fawcett, training men that they may be wise, and may turn many to righteousness.

W. J. AVERY.

N.B.—The proofs of this article have been read and slightly amended by the kindness of W. E. Winks.